

■ It's not fair that we started thinking about the *Columbia* crew as heroes since they died on February 1, 2003. While reading their biographies at <http://www.nasa.gov/columbia/crew/index.html>, I was impressed by what they had accomplished even before going on that mission, first for some of them and the last for all. This is where my real inspiration came from: not from their deaths but from their lives and their work! If you read about all the science experiments they had worked on before STS-107 and their contributions, you'll be inspired to work harder and smarter. God bless America and NASA people!

*Roumy Vekilov, Lockheed Martin Space Operations/SEAT Hypervelocity Impact Technology Facility Test Team*

■ The *Columbia* crew continues to inspire me as being an example of "religious diversity working together as one." Especially now, with all of the turmoil in the Middle East that we find ourselves in, these seven worked together as a team. They bonded and depended on one another for their very lives within the void of space in the tiny enclosure, Space Shuttle *Columbia*. They are my example. Let them be your example of how we should depend on one another within the void in our tiny enclosure, planet Earth.

*Todd A Gaspard, Flight Engineer*

■ The crew inspired me to keep my mind open to the future of space travel. No one ever said space travel would be easy or safe; we must continue to strive forward for the advancement of all endeavors associated with this. My job in the Crew and Thermal Systems Division is just a small part of the overall picture in preparing astronauts and equipment for space travel, but it is the thousands of people just like me that make it work. Everyone should be inspired by the *Columbia* crew because they would have wanted us to continue to explore space.

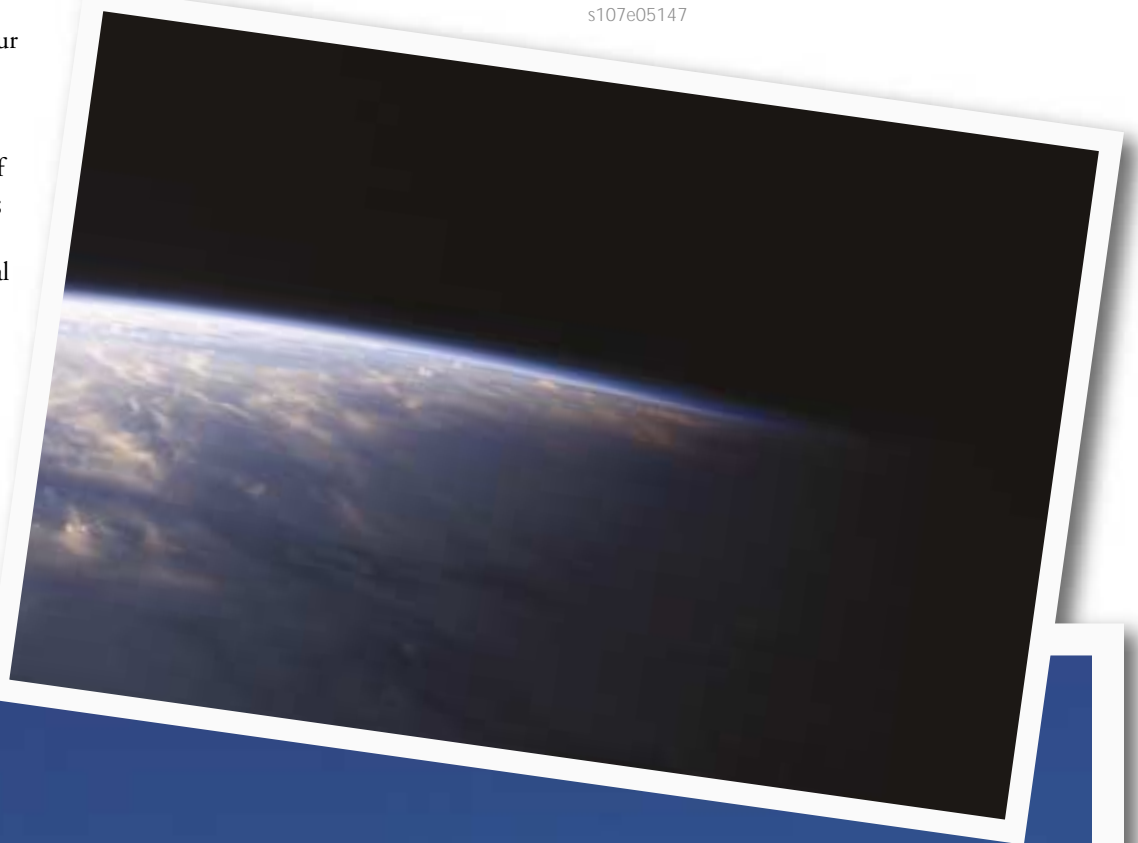
*John Neal, Crew and Thermal Systems Division*

■ I was impressed by Commander Rick Husband's devotion to his children. I met him and his family through their church; I never had the privilege of working with him at JSC. He participated in daily Bible studies and devotionals with each child, so he videotaped two sets of devotionals in advance, each one 15 days long – the number of days he expected to be away from home. Now his children have a keepsake video of their dad that shows how much he was devoted to them, and to his God. His dedication is something rare in today's world.

*Richard Coles, Lockheed Martin*

This unique view of earth was taken by one of the crewmembers of STS-107.

s107e05147



*Columbia* launches from Kennedy Space Center on January 16, 2003.  
sts107-s-005



# A higher place: Mountain peak dedicated in honor of *Columbia* and her crew

By Kendra Ceule

Colorado is full of magnificent mountain peaks. But for the families and friends of the STS-107 crew, none are more beautiful and majestic than Columbia Point.

Columbia Point, a 13,980-foot mountain peak in Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains, was named for the Space Shuttle *Columbia* and her crew that were lost on Feb. 1, 2003. The U.S. Department of the Interior made the dedication on June 10. NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe, along with STS-107 family members, joined Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton for the announcement.

"Those who explore space in the days ahead may gaze back at Earth and know that Columbia Point is there to commend a noble mission," Norton said. "The point looks up to the heavens and it allows us, once again, to thank our heroes who soared far beyond the mountain, traveled past the sky and live on in our memories forever."

In August 2003, an expedition of STS-107 family members, astronauts and support personnel journeyed to the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Their goal was to climb Columbia Point, hold a memorial service and mount a bronze plaque. While the weather didn't fully cooperate, the group of more than 40 people was able to climb higher than 13,000 feet and hold a memorial service in view of the summit. Astronaut Scott Parazynski helped lead the expedition.

"We had a beautiful dedication ceremony and built seven rock cairns in memory of the crew," he said. "We then witnessed a spectacular four-ship F-16 missing-man fly-by."

During the ceremony, a team of three experienced climbers went to the true summit and mounted the bronze plaque. "The families were enthusiastic campers," Parazynski said, adding that many of them talked about "returning at a later date to revisit their mountain."



Columbia Point is located on the east side of Kit Carson Mountain. On the northwest shoulder of the same mountain is Challenger Point, a peak previously named in memory of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*.

At the June dedication, O'Keefe commended the heroes of both missions. "When people look upon these mountains," O'Keefe said, "they see the challenge of the American frontier – bold in vision, courageous in spirit and endless in horizon. The crew of *Columbia*, like the *Challenger* before her, had these qualities at their core. These mountains are a natural testament to their memory, their spirit of exploration and will endure forever."

In August 2003, an expedition of STS-107 family members, astronauts and support personnel journeyed to the Sangre de Cristo mountains to hold a memorial service in honor of *Columbia* and her crew.

jsc2003e65943  
Photo courtesy of Scott Parazynski

## NASA thanks East Texas communities for *Columbia* support

By Tiffany Travis

In appreciation for their support of *Columbia* recovery efforts, dozens of Johnson Space Center employees provided the communities of East Texas and Western Louisiana with educational and community outreach events during September and October.

The Texas cities of Corsicana, Palestine, Nacogdoches, Lufkin, Huntington, Diboll, Hudson and Hemphill, as well as Shreveport, La., participated in a variety of NASA outreach events. The activities included astronaut appearances, educational videoconference opportunities, NASA history presentations, professional teacher development sessions, presentations of Discovery Channel and Science Channel space documentaries and many different exhibits including the International Space Station Trailers exhibit, "Space Station Imagination."

The JSC Distance Learning Network (DLN) provided students and teachers an opportunity to participate in live interactive videoconferences. Using teleconference tools, students interacted with NASA experts, toured JSC facilities and observed cutting-edge technology. The DLN team presented programs to more than 1,100 students from eight different schools in the East Texas area.

Members from JSC's Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) conducted professional teacher development workshops for approximately 350 K-12 educators in the region. Topics included rockets, space food, microgravity, Earth science, spacesuits and astronomy. In addition to the workshops, AESP conducted assembly programs for students visiting the East Texas area, educating and entertaining them

on NASA history, current endeavors and future plans for our country's space program. Students were also involved with in-depth discussions on concepts like microgravity, living and working in space and robotic technology.

"Space Station Imagination" drew large crowds during its six-city tour throughout East Texas and Western Louisiana: 23,644 visitors toured the exhibit, learning how astronauts aboard the Space Station live and work in space. Astronauts Ellen Baker, Dan Burbank, Mike Barratt, Piers Sellers and Joe Tanner participated in the exhibit's tour by signing autographs, speaking with children, giving presentations and serving as media spokespersons. In addition to astronaut participation, numerous JSC employees provided tours through the exhibit, answering questions on various topics and serving as ambassadors for NASA.

These community outreach and educational activities were publicized through many of the region's major media outlets. Ten television stations, 140 radio stations, six newspapers and numerous Web sites covered the events, conveying the message to millions of people that NASA considers the people of East Texas and western Louisiana a part of the NASA family.



The International Space Station Trailers Exhibit, "Space Station Imagination," was visited by more than 23,000 visitors during its East Texas and Western Louisiana tour.

jsc2004e00078 (top)  
jsc2004e00077 Photo by David DeHoyos



# Columbia Elementary School is dedicated to future learners and leaders

By Cheerie R. Patneau

White Sands Test Facility

Students at the new Columbia Elementary School in Las Cruces, N.M., had a blast on Sept. 18 when they made colorful paper rockets and launched them from the playground.

"I thought it would fly only a short distance," fourth-grader Miles Romney said, "but it went farther than I thought it would go!"

The rockets were launched just one day before the school's official dedication to the memory of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* and her crew. For the dedication, the school's large multipurpose room was filled with the entire student body, parents, guests and staff who enjoyed the Vista Middle School Handbell Choir's performance of "Celebrate *Columbia*." The audience also stood at attention for the Mayfield High School Junior ROTC Color Guard and the Mayfield Madrigal Singers.

Keynote speaker Astronaut James Reilly was greeted by flag-waving students as he was introduced. Reilly spoke to the audience of his memories and close friendship with the STS-107 crew. In one anecdote, Reilly told of how his friend and colleague Astronaut Michael Anderson was often told that he couldn't become a pilot. But then he spoke of Anderson's faith in himself, his hard work pursuing his goal and refusal to listen to his critics.

"Lots of people will tell you that you can't do something. But the only person that can tell you that you can't do something is you," Reilly said. "My friend Mike refused to listen to those others and went on to become an outstanding pilot."

Reilly felt that naming the school in memory of his friends "will leave a legacy that will live on in the students that will come behind you."

Reilly then presented the school with a framed collage of photos of the STS-107 astronauts.

Jennifer Terrazas, Principal of Columbia Middle School, introduced dignitaries from the Las Cruces School Board, Las Cruces Public School employees, Columbia Elementary staff members, family members and NASA White Sands Test Facility (WSTF) personnel.

Stephen Nunez, NASA WSTF Manager, presented the school with a framed, signed photo of the STS-107 crew with a commemorative mission patch and coin.

A grove of seven red oaks has been planted in the front of the school, one for each astronaut. The grove is a memorial to the STS-107 crew to be forever remembered by the students in the spirit of learning and exploring.

Several larger-than-life photographs of NASA explorers hang in the halls of the new school. Each wing of classrooms has a different theme: Apollo, Space Shuttle, International Space Station and Future Exploration. The students of Columbia are considered "Explorers."

Pleddie Baker, the WSTF Education Outreach leader who assisted in coordinating the event, said, "We are honoring the crew of *Columbia*, which was tragically lost last February. But we are also honoring a new beginning: the opening of a new elementary school and the education of our children it represents. It is NASA's hope that, by using space to inspire children to get a good education, they will also go farther and fly higher throughout their life – much like their rockets."

He added: "It is volunteers like those we have from the White Sands Test Facility, and the excellent teaching staff you have at Columbia, who believe that this not only can happen, but definitely will happen by creating these opportunities for the students."

Sonja Vestal, a Columbia Elementary teacher and the school's Science Advisor Coordinator, said, "It is an honor to be a part of Columbia Elementary School. We're truly grateful that NASA is willing to show us the pathway to a better science and technology education for our students."



Columbia Elementary School in Las Cruces, N.M., was officially dedicated to the Shuttle and crew on Sept. 19.

wstf0903e4009  
Photo by Randy Page



Astronaut James Reilly meets some of the Columbia Elementary students.

wstf0903e4049 (above)  
wstf0903e4013 Photos by Randy Page





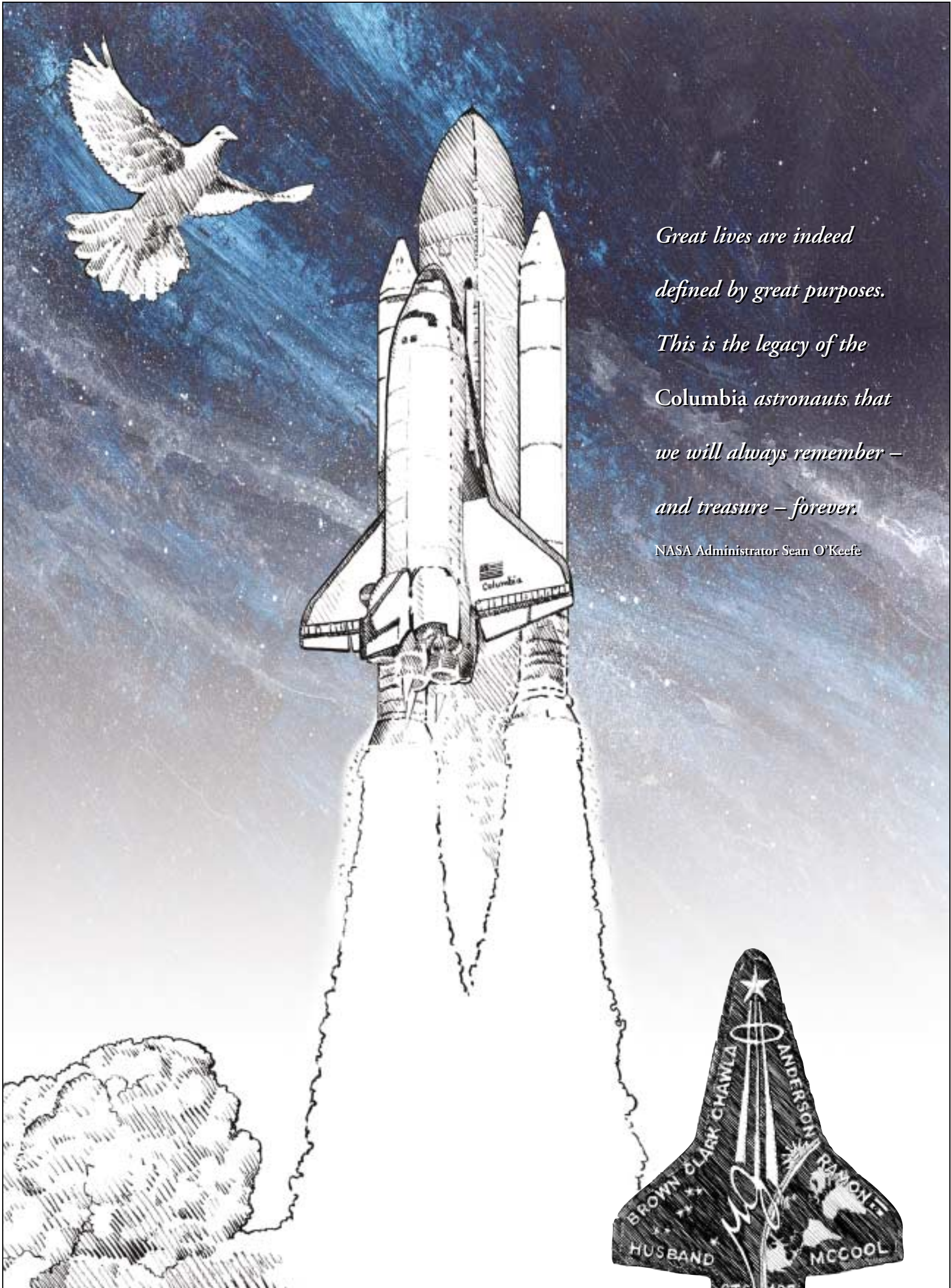


Illustration by David M. Russell of the IMPASS contract.

*Great lives are indeed  
defined by great purposes.  
This is the legacy of the  
Columbia astronauts that  
we will always remember –  
and treasure – forever.*

NASA Administrator Sean O’Keefe

SPACE CENTER  
**Roundup**

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